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News Release

For Immediate Release

911 Emergency Communications Averages 20,000 Calls Per Month In 2013

In 2013, the Springfield-Greene County 911 Emergency Communications Department averaged 20,000 9-1-1 calls per month with 77 percent from mobile devices, says Director Zim Schwartz.

The Springfield-Greene County 911 telecommunicators in the Operations Center fielded 474,962 total phone calls (emergency and non-emergency) with 241,494 of those as incoming emergency 9-1-1 calls. These are nearly the same number of 9-1-1 and total calls as seen in 2012, Schwartz says.

The 77 percent for wireless 9-1-1 calls in 2013 is slightly above the national average of 70 percent that most dispatch centers receive from mobile phones. With cell phones usage increasing over the past decade, dispatch centers have seen landline usage decrease and mobile devices increase. Springfield-Greene County has gone from approximately 40 percent in the early 2000s to the current 77 percent.

The volume of wireless calls provides a special challenge for telecommunicators who must take extra time to process the call, determine if multiple calls are being received about the same incident, and dispatch the appropriate emergency personnel. At this time, Missouri is one of only two states that do not collect money from wireless usage to help fund 9-1-1 dispatch centers. Several state organizations are working again this year in an effort to pass statewide legislation regarding wireless funding, Schwartz says.

Local funding for the Springfield-Greene County 911 Emergency Communications Department comes through the countywide 911 sales tax passed by voters in April 2007. Currently, the department employs 64 full-time employees, including telecommunicators and administration, who dispatch for 14 fire districts and nine law enforcement agencies countywide. Medical calls are immediately transferred to the appropriate local hospital for assistance.

9-1-1 telecommunicators undergo an extensive training program and must successfully complete approximately 700 hours of training before they can be considered for release as a fully trained operator and dispatcher. For the first time in history, Springfield-Greene County 911 has a certified Communications Training Officer (CTO) instructor through the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) who can now train telecommunicators in-house for our Certification Program to save time and money.

"Our 9-1-1 telecommunicators must be able to handle many different types of calls and have working knowledge of how police, fire and medical disciplines operate. They are certified to handle emergency situations when our community needs our help the most. They are busy with emergency as well as non-emergency calls for assistance as part of their daily workload,"



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calls taken and transactions handled, you understand the every day."

Schwartz reminds citizens that 9-1-1 should be used only when a response is needed from police, fire, or ambulance personnel.

For more information, contact Zim Schwartz at 417-829-6209.